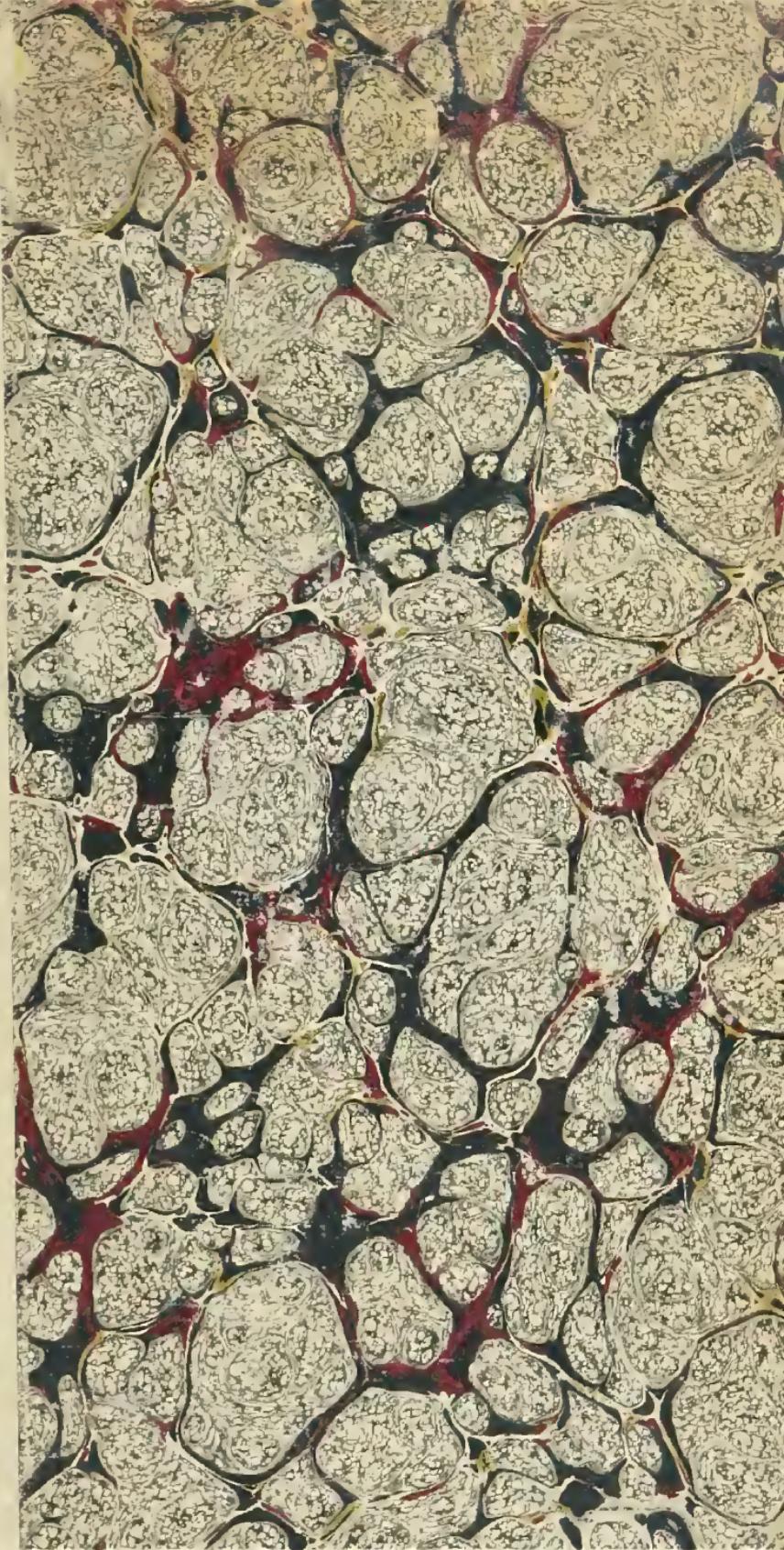


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SOME FACTS ABOUT JOHN PAUL JONES

BY

JUNIUS DAVIS

Member of the Wilmington, N. C., Bar.

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QUARTERLY"



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WILMINGTON, N. C., Feb. 5, 1906.

Junius Davis, Esq.

DEAR SIR:—The undersigned, your fellow-citizens, having read with great interest and satisfaction your admirable contribution to North Carolina history, entitled, “Some Facts About John Paul Jones,” published in the “South Atlantic Quarterly,” and desiring that this unique elucidation of the mystery of Chevalier Jones’ adopted name be published in pamphlet form, in order that it may be placed in public libraries and in private collections for future guidance, most cordially felicitate you upon its production and request your permission for its more extended circulation.

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) A. M. WADDELL,
 JOHN D. TAYLOR,
 O. P. MEARES,
 ROBERT STRANGE,
 E. S. MARTIN,
 W. B. MCKOY,
 G. G. THOMAS,
 CLAYTON GILES,
 C. W. WORTH,
 J. G. DER. HAMILTON,
 JAMES SPRUNT.

(MR. DAVIS’ REPLY.)

February 7, 1906.

DEAR SIRS:—Your courteous request for permission to republish in pamphlet form my article on Paul Jones, which recently appeared in the “South Atlantic Quarterly,” has been received, and, as Mr. Edwin Mims, one of its editors, has cordially approved this proposal on being apprized thereof, I have to add with this permission my grateful thanks for your kind appreciation of my work.

Yours truly,



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Some Facts About John Paul Jones

BY JUNIUS DAVIS,

Member of the Wilmington, N. C., Bar.

Thanks to the generous and untiring zeal of our late ambassador to France, the grave of John Paul Jones has recently been discovered in Paris, and his remains have been removed by the government to this country for interment at Annapolis. This discovery has revived the interest which our people have always taken in the career of this illustrious captain of the seas, and has of late provoked much discussion in the magazines and newspapers of the various incidents in his life, and, in particular, of the reason for his change of name. The reason for this change of name has ever been a puzzle to his biographers. Most of them pass it by with the mere statement that "he changed his name for unknown reasons." Some few attempt to account for it upon theories, which, while they may be plausible, yet do not appeal to the intelligent reader. Of these there are three, which perhaps seem most plausible, and which, one or another, are generally accepted as true by most people. I will proceed to give these, and the reasons which occur to me for rejecting them as unsound and without anything but conjecture to support them.

Sherbourne, who was, I believe, the first American biographer of Jones, says, on page 10: "Our adventurer, being at length freed from the trammels of apprenticeship, made several voyages to foreign parts, and in the year 1773 again went to Virginia to arrange the affairs of his brother, who had died there without leaving any family; and about this time in addition to his original surname, he assumed the patronymic of Jones, his father's Christian name having been John. This custom, which is of classical authority, has long been prevalent in Wales, and in various other countries," and having built up his edifice to this point, he immediately pro-

ceeds in the next breath to demolish it with the naive remark, "although it is not practiced in that part of the island in which he was born." This idea was not original with Sherbourne, but was taken by him from an article in the Edinburgh Encyclopedia, which, Sherbourne says in a note on page 11, he "learned from Mr. Lowden, the nephew of Jones, a respectable merchant, now (1825) resident at Charleston, S. C., was written from the lips of Mr. Lowden's mother for that work by Dr. Duncan, of Dumfries, Scotland." Nor did it come from "the lips of Mr. Lowden's mother," as is plainly apparent from the context in Sherbourne and from the account given in the life of Jones commonly ascribed to his niece, Miss Jannette Taylor, but it was developed in the imagination of Dr. Duncan.

Now whoever heard of a Scotchman rummaging among the traditions and customs of the Welsh in a search for a change of his name? And who ever heard of such a custom being prevalent in any part of Scotland? Besides, at this period of his life, Jones was a matured man, twenty-six years of age, had come to settle definitely in America, had turned his back forever on his native land, and was never again to see a single member of his family. In fact, it was in 1771 that he saw his relations in Scotland for the last time.* No one can read his life and his correspondence, without being impressed by the fact that his interest in his family was prompted more by duty and sentiment than by any real love or affection. He was often in England after 1771, but he never went near his family or evinced the least desire to see any of them. In truth he had risen far above the humble gardener, his father, and while he at times corresponded with his family, he moved in a different world in which they had no part. If it was filial affection which induced the patronymic of Jones, is it not certain that his family would have known it? Would he not out of the same love have hastened to tell it to his mother who was then living, if not to his

* Taylor, 23.

sisters? The mere fact that he did not do so, that he studiously concealed it from them, is to my mind the strongest refutation of this surmise of Dr. Duncan. It must be remembered also that when he took upon himself the name of Jones, or shortly afterwards, he dropped the prænomen John and usually called himself Paul Jones.

In the life of Jones by his niece, Jannette Taylor, the only mention of this event is as follows (page 31): "At the time when Paul settled (or, more properly, supposed he meant to settle,) in Virginia, it would seem that he assumed the additional surname of Jones. Previous to this date, his letters are signed John Paul. *We are left to conjecture the reason of this arbitrary change. His relations were never able to assign one; there is no allusion to the circumstance in the manuscripts which he left, and tradition is silent on the subject.*" The italics are mine.

I take it that "tradition," as here used, meant tradition among the family in Scotland, and as so used, I admit the truth of it. But that tradition was silent in North Carolina, I deny, though it had not, at that time, spread beyond her border. We were ever proud of our traditions in this State, but clung to them so tenaciously that we were loath to let them stray abroad and be known to other people.

Another theory, and the wildest of them all, but one which also has its believers, is that John Paul came to America and took the name of Jones to conceal his identity and avoid arrest for the murder of the carpenter Maxwell. Now, when Paul flogged Maxwell for his mutinous conduct, he was in command of the ship John on his second voyage in her. He discharged Maxwell at the Island of Tobago in May, 1770. Maxwell immediately had Paul haled before the Vice-Admiralty Court for assault, but the complaint was dismissed as frivolous. Later on, in England in 1772, he was charged with the murder of Maxwell, and it seems that an indictment, presumably for murder or manslaughter, was found against

him. A complete and perfect contradiction of this calumny is to be found in Brady, pages 9 and 10, and Miss Taylor's book, pages 18 and 20, where she gives the affidavit of the Judge of the Vice-Admiralty Court, who heard the complaint of Maxwell, and of the master of the ship on which Maxwell died.

So that it seems abundantly proven, not merely that Paul did not flee England on this account, but positively that he disdained to fly and met and boldly confronted the charge. In a letter written by Paul to his mother and sisters, speaking of this occurrence, dated London, September 4, 1772, he says: "I staked my honor, life and fortune for six long months on the verdict of a British jury, notwithstanding I was sensible of the general prejudices which ran against me; but, after all, none of my accusers had the courage to confront me."

Another theory is the one first advanced by Buell in his "Life of Jones." This book is one of the latest attempts at an extended history of Jones, and in spite of some errors, is an exceedingly interesting work. Though written more than one hundred years after the death of Jones, and after numerous writers had seemingly exhausted every available source of light and information, he gives many incidents, and interesting ones too, in the career of Jones that were never heard of before. Some of these are highly colored and seemingly very improbable, and some without support in fact. But it is no part of this article to criticise Buell's book, save that part which refers to the reason for Jones's change of name.

Buell says, page 1, that John Paul's older brother William was adopted in 1743 by a relative named William Jones, a well-to-do Virginia planter, while he was on a visit to Kirkbean Parish, and that William then took the name of Jones. On page 6 he says: "Old William Jones died in 1760, and by the terms of his will had made John Paul the residuary legatee of his brother (William) in case the latter should die without issue, provided that John Paul would assume, as his brother had done, the patronymic of Jones. On his visit to

Rappahanock in 1769, Captain John Paul legally qualified under the provisions of the will of William Jones by recording his assent to its requirements in due form."

Naturally the reader would presume that the statement of an historical fact so positively made was based on record evidence; but not so. The entire statement is without support in every particular. I have a duly certified copy of the will of William Paul, dated March 22, 1772, procured in May last from the clerk of the Circuit Court of Spotsylvania County, Virginia, and taken from the records on file in his office. It begins thus: "I, William Paul, of the town of Fredericksburg and county of Spotsylvania in Virginia, being in perfectly sound memory, thanks be to Almighty God," etc., etc. The third clause of the will is in these words: "It is my will and desire that my lots and houses in this town be sold and converted into money for as much as they will bring, that with all my other estate being sold and what of my outstanding debts that can be collected, I give and bequeath unto my beloved sister, Mary Young, and her two eldest children, in Arbigland in Parish Kirkbean, in the Stewartry of Galloway, and their heirs forever. And I do hereby empower my executors to sell and convey the said lots and houses and make a fee simple therein, and I do appoint my friends, Mr. William Templeman and Isaac Hislop, my executors, to see this my will executed, confirming this to be my last will and testament."

This sister, Mary Young, afterwards married a Mr. William Lowden, who removed to this country and was a merchant in Charleston, S. C., as late as 1825. Both of the executors renounced, and one John Atkinson was appointed administrator and gave bond in the sum of five hundred pounds, the amount fixed by the court. The will was admitted to probate December 16, 1774. It is subscribed "William Paul," and the attestation clause is—"William Paul, having heard the above will distinctly read, declared the same to be his last will and testament in the presence of us." Three

several times in the will does the testator solemnly declare his name to be William Paul, and the name of his brother John Paul is not mentioned within the "four corners" of the instrument. But this is not all. In June last, I wrote to the clerk of the Circuit Court of Spotsylvania County that it was asserted that one William Jones, planter, died in Fredericksburg about 1760, leaving a will in which he devised all of his property, including a plantation on the Rappahanock, to William Paul or John Paul, and asking him if this was true. In reply, he wrote me that William Jones did not mention the names of William Paul or John Paul in his will, and that the only tract of land owned by him, so far as the records showed, some 397 acres, had been sold in his lifetime. These facts would seem to be a complete refutation of Buell's statement. Yet, very nearly all of the many writers who have of late been filling the newspapers and magazines with articles about Paul Jones, have adopted Buell's theory and asserted it positively and confidently, without even giving Buell the credit of the discovery. Let us take one instance of the reckless manner in which these articles are written. A sketch of Paul Jones, written by Alfred Henry Lewis, is now running in the *Cosmopolitan*. In the August, 1905, number, Mr. Lewis gives the same account as does Buell for Paul's change of name. He says that in the month of April, 1773—mark the date—Paul landed on the Rappahanock at the foot of the William Jones plantation, where his brother William was then living; that he found him on his death bed, and his last words were that his name had been William Paul Jones since he inherited the plantation from William Jones, and that he, John, must take the name of John Paul Jones at his death, with the plantation. In the September number is printed, with the continuation of his article, a cut of William Paul's tombstone, bearing the name of William Paul—not William Paul Jones—inscribed upon it, and the date of his death as 1774.

Is it not very singular, to say the least, that, if William Jones was a relative of Paul's, and while on a visit to Kirkbean adopted William Paul, who then took the name of Jones, this fact was not known and well known to all of the members of the family? How could such an important event in the quiet, secluded life of their humble home have been forgotten. And yet it was not known to his niece, Miss Taylor, who, as said before, came to this country to compile and write the life of her uncle, nor was it heard of until it was told to Buell by the great grandnephew of Jones in 1873.

The Rev. Cyrus Townsend Brady, in an article which appeared in the July, 1905, number of *Munsey's Magazine*, challenges this statement of Buell, exposes its fallacy, and declares his belief in the North Carolina tradition. And he gives strong and convincing reasons for his view of the matter. He says Buell wrote him that he got his information from one William Lowden, whom he met in St. Louis in 1873, and who was a great grandnephew of Paul Jones. Against this, besides the record evidence above quoted, we have the equally positive statement, quoted hereafter, made by William Lowden, the nephew of John Paul, to Mr. Hubard, of Virginia, in 1846, that he took the name of Jones out of affection for Willie and Allen Jones, of North Carolina. Which of the two statements should carry the more weight to the unbiased mind—the statement of the nephew, made in 1846, to a lineal descendant of Willie Jones, or the one made years later by the great grandnephew to Buell? The question suggests but one answer. But to my mind the grandnephew gives testimony in support of my contention. He says that John Paul Jones took the name of Jones from William Jones, and the lane from William to Willie is but short. I admit this, but the rest of his statement is utterly disproved by the cold, dispassionate evidence of a court of record.

I have thus endeavored to show how utterly unreliable, how entirely unfounded, is the voice of history. Let us see now,

what tradition, as it has come down to us in North Carolina from our forefathers, may have to say. It will be conceded, I believe, by all who knew him, that my father, the late Hon. George Davis, was one of the most learned, most painstaking, and intelligent students of the history and traditions of our State. To these he devoted a very large portion of his leisure moments, with much labor, keen delight and untiring study. Soon after I began the practice of law in his office, about 1870 or '71, he told me, as a fact well known to, and accepted by, the men of the older generation in the State, from whom it had come to him, that soon after coming to Virginia, in 1773, Paul met Willie Jones and paid him quite a long visit at his home, "The Grove," in Halifax County, N. C.; that he conceived a great attachment for Jones and his most accomplished wife, and out of affection for them added Jones to his name.

The following is an extract from a letter dated Saratoga, Buckingham County, Virginia, February 22, 1876, first published in the *Baltimore Sun* and afterwards in the *Charleston News and Courier*: . . . "While no revolutionary biography can boast more public events of vivid and intense interest than that of Paul Jones, none is so bare and meagre in personal detail; even the fact that he has immortalized a name, which was his only by selection and adoption, is slurred over in history with a calm statement that 'he changed his name for unknown reasons.' As the reasons were not unknown, and, however difficult to obtain later, were then easily accessible, it appears to have been rather a lack of careful and intelligent investigation, than of facts, which caused their suppression. . . . In 1773 the death of his brother in Virginia, whose heir he was, induced him to settle in Virginia. It was then he added to his name, and henceforth was known as 'Paul Jones.' This was done in compliment to one of the most noted statesmen of that day, and, in the love and gratitude it shadows forth, is a reproach to a people who could

neglect in life and forget in death. It appears, that, before permanently settling in Virginia, moved by the restlessness of his old seafaring life, he wandered about the country, finally straying to North Carolina. There he became acquainted with two brothers, Willie and Allen Jones. They were both leaders in their day, and wise and honored in their generation. Allen Jones was an orator and silver tongued. Willie Jones, the foremost man of his State, and one of the most remarkable men of his time. . . . His home, 'The Grove,' near Halifax, was not only the resort of the cultivated and refined, but the home of the homeless. . . . And it was here the young adventurer, John Paul, was first touched by those gentler and purer influences, which changed not only his name, but himself, from the rough and reckless mariner into the polished man of society, who was the companion of kings, and the lion and pet of Parisian salons. The almost worshiping love and reverence, awakened in his hitherto wild and untamed nature, by the generous kindness of the brothers, found expression in his adoption of their name. The truth of this account is not only attested by the descendants of Willie Jones, but by the nephew and descendant of Paul Jones, Mr. Lowden, of South Carolina. This gentleman in 1846 was in Washington, awaiting the passage of a bill by congress, awarding him the land claim of his distinguished uncle, Paul Jones, which had been allowed by the Executive of Virginia. Hon. E. W. Hubard, then a member of congress from Virginia, had in 1844 prepared a report on Virginia land claims, in which the committee endorsed that of Paul Jones. This naturally attracted Mr. Lowden to him, and, learning that Mrs. Hubard was a descendant of Willie Jones, he repeated both to Col. Hubard and herself the cause of his uncle's change of name, and added that amongst his pictures hung a portrait of Allen Jones."

I have quoted largely from this interesting letter, because so many of the statements contained in it are true beyond

contradiction, and because it is so strongly corroborative of the tradition I am seeking to sustain. Col. E. W. Hubbard, of Virginia, married Miss Sallie Eppes, who was a granddaughter of Willie Jones. He was a member of the 29th congress, and in 1846 a bill was introduced in that body for the relief of the representatives of Paul Jones, which passed both houses. This bill, however, was by some mischance lost in the senate, and did not become a law. In the next congress, it was again introduced, and finally passed in March, 1848. As early as 1787, congress had recommended the settlement of Jones's claim for "pay, advances, and expenses" amounting to £9784 16s. 1d., but a full half century elapsed before justice was permitted to be done to the memory of one who had rendered such invaluable and illustrious services to this country. What a commentary upon the gratitude of republics!

Paul Jones's will was executed in Paris on July 18, 1792, the day of his death. A duly exemplified copy of it was admitted to probate in Philadelphia on May 25, 1848, and Frances E. Lowden appointed administratrix *de bene esse cum testamento annexo*, and the government paid to her the sum of \$21,202.44 for Jones's share of the prize money from the ships Betsey, Union and Charming Polly, captured by his squadron off the coast of England, his pay from June 21, 1781, to May, 1788, \$5,040, and \$2,598.42 for moneys advanced by him for the government, aggregating the sum of \$28,840.86.

Again. I have before mentioned the fact that Jones had a nephew named Lowden, who lived in Charleston, S. C., in 1825.* Now, what more natural and reasonable than that this nephew should be in Washington, when this bill claimed the attention of congress, to give his personal aid and attention towards its passage, and the final accomplishment of a tardy act of justice.

It may seem strange that this cause for Paul's change of

* See Sherbourne, note to page 10. Miss Taylor, page 14.

name should be known to Mr. Lowden, and not to Mrs. Taylor, Jones's sister, and her children. But then there were many strange and at this period unaccountable incidents in the life of this singular man. It would seem that there was not much love lost between the Lowdens and the Taylors, and therefore little or no correspondence between them. The following is an extract from a letter from Jones to his sister, Mrs. Taylor, dated Paris, December 27, 1790, and taken from Miss Taylor's book, page 519: "I duly received, *my dear Mrs. Taylor*, your letter of the 16th August, but ever since that time I have been unable to answer it, not having been capable to go out of my chamber, and having been for the most part obliged to keep my bed. . . . I shall not conceal from you that your family discord aggravates infinitely all my pains. My grief is inexpressible, that two sisters, whose happiness is so interesting to me, do not live together in that mutual tenderness and affection, which would do so much honor to themselves and to the memory of their worthy relations. . . . Though I wish to be the instrument of making family-peace, which I flatter myself would tend to promote the happiness of you all, yet I by no means desire you to do violence to your own feelings, by taking any step, that is contrary to your own judgment and inclination." *

Miss Taylor gives no explanation of this bitter feeling between the two sisters, and this letter is the only allusion to it in her book. I venture to say that it was caused by the will of William Paul and the fact that he gave all his estate to his sister Mary, who afterwards married William Lowden. Every lawyer of experience well knows that there is nothing so well calculated to create bitterness and discord in a family as an unequal distribution of his estate by one of its members.

Mr. Lowden moved to this country, at what time is unknown to me, and lived in South Carolina, while the Taylors remained in Scotland. It is easy to see that he may well have heard of this tradition, about which I am writing, after he

* The letter from Mrs. Taylor to which the above is an answer is not published in Miss Taylor's book.

came to this country and have convinced himself of the truth of it; and at the same time that it should not be known to the family who remained in Scotland.

That distinguished and accomplished gentleman, the late Col. Cadwallader Jones, of Rock Hill, S. C., who died in 1899 at the age of 86 years, in his genealogical history of the Jones family, page 6, says: "Willie Jones lived at 'The Grove,' near Halifax. These old mansions, grand in their proportions, were the homes of abounding hospitality. In this connection, I may mention that when John Paul Jones visited Halifax, then a young sailor and stranger, he made the acquaintance of those grand old patriots, Allen and Willie Jones. He was a young man, but an old tar, with a bold, frank, sailor bearing, that attracted their attention. He became a frequent visitor at their houses, where he was always welcome. He soon grew fond of them, and as a mark of his esteem and admiration, he adopted their name, *saying that if he lived he would make them proud of it.* Thus John Paul became Paul Jones—it was his fancy. He named his ship the Bon Homme Richard in compliment to Franklin; he named himself Jones, in compliment to Allen and Willie Jones. When the first notes of war sounded, he obtained letters from these brothers to Joseph Hewes, member of congress from North Carolina, and through his influence received his first commission in the navy. I am now the oldest living descendant of General Allen Jones. I remember my aunt, Mrs. Willie Jones, who survived her husband many years, and when a boy I heard these facts spoken of in both families."

The distinguished historian of South Carolina, the late General Edward McCrady, of Charleston, S. C., in a letter dated April 3, 1900, says: "Mrs. McCrady was the granddaughter of Gen. Wm. R. Davie, of revolutionary fame, who married the daughter of Gen. Allen Jones, of Mount Gallant, Northampton, N. C. Tradition in her branch of the family

has been, that it was Allen Jones who befriended John Paul and not his brother Willie. . . . It was in honor of Allen Jones that he adopted the name of Jones as surname to that of Paul."

Col. W. H. S. Burgwyn, in his sketch of "The Grove" in volume 2, No. 9 of the North Carolina Booklet, mentions a letter received from Mrs. Wm. W. Alston, of Isle of Wight County, Virginia, a granddaughter of Willie Jones, over eighty years of age. She writes: "You ask did John Paul Jones change his name in compliment to my grandfather, Willie Jones. I have always heard that he did, and there is no reason to doubt the fact. Not only have I always heard it, but it was confirmed by my cousin, Mrs. Hubard, wife of Colonel E. Hubard, from Virginia, while in Washington in 1856* with her husband, who was a member of congress. She there met a nephew of John Paul Jones, who sought her out on hearing who she was. He told her of hearing his uncle and the family speak of the incident often and his great devotion to the family, so that in my opinion you can state it as an historical fact."

So that, to whatever branch of the Jones family we turn, whether to the descendants of Allen or of Willie, and whether living in North Carolina, or South Carolina, or Virginia, we find the same well cherished tradition that Paul took the name of Jones out of love for one or the other of these two brothers. And who shall say that this tradition, so long and so well preserved and sustained, even through a century and more, does not carry with it much greater weight and authority, than the wild surmises of *soi-disant* historians. It matters not for the purposes of this article, whether it was from love of Allen or love of Willie, so that the fact remains.

But we are not left to tradition alone for authority; there are writers who rise to the dignity of historians who also testify to this fact. John H. Wheeler, the historian of North

*This is an evident error and should be 1846.—J. D.

Carolina, was a most indefatigable gatherer and collector of the traditions and historical events of this State. While not always strictly accurate in his details, yet his works are of acknowledged value and high authority. In his reminiscences, page 198, he says: "The daring and celebrated John Paul Jones, whose real name was John Paul, of Scotland, when quite young, visited Mr. Willie Jones at Halifax, and became so fascinated with him, and his charming wife, that he adopted this family's name. In this name (John Paul Jones) he offered his services to congress, and was made lieutenant, December 22, 1775, on the recommendation of Willie Jones."

In Appleton's Encyclopedia, volume 3, page 462, is a sketch of Allen and Willie Jones and of Mary Montford, wife of Willie Jones. I quote from this: "It is said that it was in affectionate admiration of this lady (Mrs. Willie Jones) John Paul Jones, whose real name was John Paul, added Jones to his name, and under it, by the recommendation of Willie, offered his services to congress."

In the article on John Paul Jones in Harper's Encyclopedia of United States History, volume 5, page 189, the writer says: "Jones came to Virginia in 1773, inheriting the estate of his brother, who died there. Offering his services to congress, he was made first lieutenant in the navy in December, 1775, when out of gratitude to General Jones, of North Carolina, he assumed his name. Before that he was John Paul."

One of the latest works on the life of Jones is that written by the Rev. C. T. Brady, and published in 1900. He had access not only to all previous works on this subject, but also to a large number of rare books, pamphlets and manuscripts not available to earlier writers. He also says, that, in none of the correspondence of Jones which now remains, does he allude to his change of name. He says, page 10: "Very little is known of his life from this period"—that is, after his

coming to America—"until his entry into the public service of the United States. . . . During this period, however, he took that step which has been a puzzle to so many of his biographers, and which he never explained in any of his correspondence that remains. He came to America under the name of John Paul; he re-appeared after *this period of obscurity* under the name of John Paul Jones."

Mr. Brady mentions the claim advanced by the descendants of Willie and Allen Jones that it was out of affection for this family that Paul changed his name; and while he mentions it without any expression of his belief or disbelief, yet he gives what I have always considered a strong reason for its support. No thoughtful student can follow the career of Paul without being struck by the almost magic transformation, in a short period, of the rough sailor into the polished gentleman and courtier, whose ease and grace of person and charm of manner made him distinguished even in the aristocratic circles of Paris. What brought about this marvelous re-incarnation of the man? He went to sea an apprentice at the age of twelve, and a few years later was engaged in the slave trade, in which he continued, rising to the position of first mate of a slaver, until 1768, when he was twenty-one years of age. So that during the formative period of his life, when the nature of a man is most susceptible, and when it is generally and most easily shaped and moulded by the surrounding influences of his daily life, we find him engaged in the most brutalizing and degrading of services, one well calculated not merely to blunt and sear, but to kill all the gentle and refining tendencies which God may have implanted in his soul. So we may well ask what wrought this transformation? When he quit the slave trade he still continued to follow the sea until he came to Virginia in 1773. So far we find in his life no explanation of this change. It must have taken place during that "*period of obscurity*" which followed, until he stepped forth in the full blaze of public notice as the Senior

First Lieutenant of the Continental Navy in December, 1775. As I said before, Mr. Brady gives, what has ever seemed to me, the true explanation. Speaking of the friendship which sprang up between Willie Jones and Paul, and the invitation from Willie Jones to Paul to visit at his plantation (page 12), he says: "The lonely, friendless little Scotchman gratefully accepted the invitation—the society of gentle people always delighted him, he ever loved to mingle with great folk throughout his life, and passed a long period at 'The Grove' in Halifax County, the residence of Willie, and at 'Mt. Gallant' in Northampton County, the home of Allen. While there, he was thrown much in the society of the wife of Willie Jones, a lady noted and remembered for her grace of mind and person. . . . The Jones brothers were men of culture and refinement. They were Eton boys, and had completed their education by travel and observation in Europe. That they should have become so attached to the young sailor as to have made him their guest for long periods, and cherished the highest regard for him subsequently, is an evidence of the character and quality of the man. Probably for the first time in his life Paul was introduced to the society of the refined and cultivated. A new horizon opened before him, and he breathed, as it were, another atmosphere. Life for him assumed a new complexion. Always an interesting personality, with his habits of thought, assiduous study, coupled with the responsibilities of command, he needed but a little contact with gentle people and polite society, to add to his character those graces of manner, which are the final crown of the gentleman, and which the best contemporaries have borne testimony he did not lack. The impression made upon him by the privilege of this association was of the deepest, and he gave to his new friends, and to Mrs. Jones especially, a warm-hearted affection and devotion amounting to veneration."

No other of Jones's biographers, so far as my limited library has afforded me the means of research, has ever at-

tempted to account for this phase of his character. Certainly the argument advanced by Mr. Brady is not only very plausible, but is reasonable and grounded upon well attested tradition. Since this article was written, Mr. Brady, in an article before mentioned, gives his voice in favor of the tradition I have related.

There is another event, by far the most important and remarkable in the life of Jones, which his biographers have passed by with bare mention, and so far as I have been able to ascertain, without any attempt at explanation. How, by what means and influence, did he obtain his commission as the Senior First Lieutenant of the Continental Navy?

Hill, in his "Twenty-six Historic Ships," page 12, says, "He (that is, Paul Jones,) was fain to content himself with a First Lieutenant's commission dated December 7, 1775, which was handed to him in Independence Hall by John Hancock in person on December 22, 1775. Paul Jones was thus the first officer of the Continental Navy to receive his commission."

Jones's autobiography was first published in this country, I believe, in *Niles's Register*, the first instalment appearing in the weekly number of June 6, 1812. It commences abruptly with his connection with the Continental Navy, and contains no allusion to the previous events of his most eventful life. ". . . At the commencement of the American war (during the year 1775) I was employed to fit out *the little squadron* which the Congress had placed under Commodore Hopkins, who was appointed to the command of all the armed vessels appertaining to America; and I hoisted with my hands the American flag on board the *Alfred*, which was then displayed for the first time. I at the same time acquainted Mr. Hewes, a member of congress, and my *particular friend*, with a project for seizing the island of St. Helena," etc., etc. Mr. Hewes was then a member of the congress from North Carolina and a member of the Committee on Marine

Affairs. I will later on allude to him and the cause of the friendship which Paul claimed with him.

These things must arrest the attention of the thoughtful reader and prompt him to inquire what brought about this sudden rise of Paul from obscurity to such signal honors. How did it come that this adventurer, of humble origin and poor estate, without apparent friends or influence, who had passed his life in the merchant service, after a scant two years' residence in this country, and that spent in an obscurity not penetrated by any of his numerous biographers, achieved such high rank over the heads of so many able American seamen eagerly seeking the position. I make bold to say, that it was his friends, Willie and Allen Jones, who, bringing all their powerful influence to bear on his behalf with their intimate friend Hewes, who was a member of the Committee on Marine Affairs, secured him the commission. In the intimate association which grew up between the two brothers and Paul during his long stay at "The Grove" and "Mount Gallant," it is only reasonable to assume, that the constant and overshadowing theme of discussion between them was the critical condition of affairs in the colonies, the battle of Lexington, the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence, the resolves of the Provincial and Continental Congresses, the embodying of the militia, all pointing to one inevitable end—war. The leaders of the people were at that time active, passing from point to point in the State, and gathering for counsel at the homes of the influential. It is certain that many such gatherings and conferences were had at "The Grove" and "Mount Gallant"; and, with our knowledge of Paul's character, we can be well assured that he was a forward and eager participant in all of them. In the coming conflict, he foresaw the opportunity his ambitious soul had been craving for—rank, distinction, homage, fame, power—and we can see him, with all the vigor of his powerful mind, his strong and forceful personality, his consummate knowl-

edge of his subject, unfolding his plans to an attentive audience of an American navy to be created and commanded by himself, which would destroy the commerce of England, levy heavy tribute upon her seaport cities, wrest from her, whose proud boast was,

“That not a sail without permission spreads,”

the supremacy of the seas, and above all send the name of Paul Jones ringing throughout the civilized world.

Here at “The Grove,” Hewes was a frequent and welcome visitor, and here he met and became acquainted with Paul. Hewes lived in Edenton, and was a merchant of considerable means, extensively engaged in shipping. He was an educated gentleman, the intimate friend and associate of John Harvey, Samuel Johnston (to whose sister he was engaged at the time of her death), Iredell, Buncombe, Harnett, the Joneses, and all the other leading men of the State. He had been a member for years of the General Assemblies, was a member of the Provincial Congresses, with Willie Jones, and was one of the delegates from this State to the first, second and third Continental Congresses, and was one of the signers on behalf of this State of the Declaration of Independence.

In December, 1773, he was appointed by the General Assembly one of the Committee of Correspondence for the State. The chief duty of this committee was to keep in communication and touch with the other colonies upon the issues of the day and the common defense. As a member of this important body, he was brought into an acquaintance with all the leading men throughout the country, and when sent later as a delegate to the Continental Congress, he went, not as a stranger to a strange body, but as one well known and of influence in his State.

He was a member of the Marine Committee of the First Continental Congress, which had in charge the whole naval department, and was the chairman of that committee in the second congress. He was virtually the first Secretary of the Navy.

Here we find the reason of Paul's friendship with Hewes, and the true ground of his appointment as Senior First Lieutenant of the Continental Navy. There is no other hypothesis upon which it can be accounted for. So long as Hewes was on the Naval Committee and in a position to assist in his advancement, we find many letters from Paul to him, some explaining his actions in certain matters and others complaining of the injustice done him in the advancement over him of officers his juniors in date of appointment.

We gather from these letters that he relied on Hewes not only for aid in his promotion, but for assistance in all matters in which he might be brought in conflict with the navy department. I give here in their entirety three letters written by Paul Jones which may be of interest to the readers of the QUARTERLY and which tend to show the great obligations which he was under to Mr. Hewes:

CAPTAIN JONES TO LIEUTENANT SPOONER.

ALFRED, 12th November, 1776.

OFF THE COAST OF CAPE BRETON.

SIR:—You are hereby appointed commander of our prize the brigantine *Active*, from Liverpool for Halifax. You are directed to proceed with all possible despatch for the State of North Carolina, and to deliver your charge (the brigantine *Active* with my letters) unto Robert Smith, Esq., the agent at Edenton. I request you to be very careful to keep a good look-out to prevent your being surprised or retaken; and you must by no means break bulk, or destroy any part of the cargo or stores except what may be absolutely necessary for your subsistence during the passage. If you find it impossible to reach and get into North Carolina, you are at liberty to go into any other of the United States of North America. I wish you a safe and speedy passage, and am, sir, your most obedient, very humble servant,

JOHN PAUL JONES.

To Mr. Walter Spooner, Lieutenant of the ship-of-war the *Alfred*, and Commander of the *Alfred*'s prize, the brigantine *Active*.

N. B.—When off the bar of Ocracoke you are to hoist a jack or ensign on the under part of your jib-room as a signal for a pilot, and hoist your ensign union down.

CAPTAIN JONES TO ROBERT SMITH.

ALFRED, OFF THE COAST OF CAPE BRETON,
18th November, 1776.

SIR:—I am happy in this opportunity of acknowledging the great obligation I owe to Mr. Hewes, by addressing my prize, the brigantine *Active*, to you. I have seen and do esteem yourself; but I knew your brother James well, *when I was myself a son of fortune*. You will perhaps hear from me again in a short time. Meanwhile you may promulgate that I have taken the last transport with clothing for Canada; no other will come out this season, and all that have been sent before her are taken. This will make Burgoyne "shake a cloth in the wind," and check his progress on the lakes. I have taken a private adventure of Captain Foxe's (in slops) for the use of my seamen, and should he be allowed his private trade, you will please to give him any credit he may occasionally want under fifty pounds sterling, till I write you more particularly on the subject.

I have the honor to be, with much esteem, sir, your most obedient, very humble servant,

JOHN PAUL JONES.

To Robert Smith, Esq., agent for the State of North Carolina.

FROM LETTER BOOK OF JOHN PAUL JONES—PAGE 32. NOW
IN LIBRARY—NAVY DEPARTMENT.

RANGER, BREST 27TH: MAY 1778.

My dear and Honored Sir

I had the Honor of writing to you from Nantes the 10th of December last:—I sent three Copies each inclosing Copies of my letters to you from Portsmouth. I leave the enclosed Packet for Mr. Livingston open for your perusal—and you are at free liberty to Copy from it any Part that may seem worth your Attention—I mention this well knowing how much you have interested yourself in my Concerns, for which I never can sufficiently thank you.

I have my Dear Sir the Honor to be with real Esteem,

Your's &c—

Honorable Joseph Hewes.

Spooner, the prize master of the *Active*, however, disobeyed Jones's express instructions, and instead of carrying his prize into Edenton, he carried it to Dartmouth, Massachusetts, where his brother was a prize agent. His motive in this was too plain for explanation.

It is certain that early in their acquaintance, which was

promoted by Willie and Allen Jones, Hewes had conceived a strong friendship for Paul Jones, and a thorough appreciation of his masterly abilites and profound knowledge of the science of his calling. He was active in bringing him to the notice of the Marine Committee, of Washington himself, and the leading members of the congress. At a meeting of the Marine or Naval Committee held June 24, 1775, upon the motion of Hewes, Jones was invited to appear before the committee and give it such advice and information as he might think would be useful. The invitation was eagerly accepted by him, and in response he soon went to Philadelphia. A list of inquiries in writing was given him by the committee, first as to "the proper qualifications of naval officers," and second, "the kind or kinds of armed vessels most desirable for the service of the United Colonies, keeping in view the limited resources of the congress."

I wish that I had the space to give in full Jones's letters in reply to these two inquiries. They clearly show the transcendent genius of the man.

Belknap in his preface to Hill's most interesting book, says: "Equally fortunate was it, too, when the creation of a navy was becoming a question of vital concern to the country, that Paul Jones, the masterly seaman and consummate naval commander of the Revolution, was at hand to lay before the Marine Committee his luminous letters embodying his views as to the material and personnel of the navy—letters so strong and forceful, so illuminating, and instructive, that the one pertaining to personnel may well stand for all time." This letter on personnel was addressed to Hewes, who before submitting it to the committee showed it to Gen. Washington, whose comment upon it was: "Mr. Jones is clearly not only a master mariner within the scope of the art of navigation, but he also holds a strong and profound sense of the political and military weight of command on the sea. His powers of usefulness are great and must be constantly kept in view."

The senior officers of the new navy were recommended by

the Marine Committee early in December, 1775, to the congress, and appointed by it. The committee placed Paul Jones at the head of the first lieutenants. Buell says there was a very bitter and heated debate in the committee, over this placement of Jones, between Hewes and John Adams. Hewes earnestly urged the appointment of Jones as a captain, while Adams bitterly opposed it and championed Saltonstall of New England. In speaking of this debate, Hewes says: "The attitude of Mr. Adams was in keeping with the always imperious and often arrogant tone of the Massachusetts people at that time. They contended that they had shed the first blood, both their own and that of the enemy. They urged that they had already yielded everything to Virginia and Pennsylvania in the organization and command of the army; that they, representing the principal maritime colony, were entitled to the leading voice in the creation of the naval force."

Here we have a fair illustration of the same petty bickerings, small jealousies, and place hunting for favorites, at the expense of the good of the country, which have in time of war, even to this date, disgraced this republic.

The New England influence was, however, too great for Hewes and he could only obtain the position of senior lieutenant for Jones. Of the five captains at this time appointed by congress, all save the gallant but ill-fated Biddle, proved miserable failures, and two at least, Esek Hopkins and Saltonstall, were forced to retire from the navy in disgrace. But the wonderful genius for naval warfare subsequently so signally displayed by Jones, marks the prescience of Hewes, his clear judgment of men, and keen insight into character. It is interesting to note here that John Adams was forced to admit in later years the grievous error that he had made. When Jones was afterwards, June 26, 1781, appointed to the fine 70-gun ship, "America," which was built at Portsmouth under his supervision, and which, however, he was destined never to command, Adams wrote him:

"The command of the "America" could not have been more judiciously bestowed, and it is with impatience that I wish her at sea, where she will do honor to her name. . . . Indeed, if I could see a prospect of half a dozen line of battle ships under the American flag, commanded by Commodore Paul Jones, engaged with a British force equal or not hopelessly superior, I apprehend the event would be so glorious for the United States, and would lay so sure a foundation for the prosperity of its navy, that it would be rich compensation for the continuance of the war." In reply to this letter, Jones could not resist a very neat thrust under the ribs. He wrote: "If I had a squadron of ships like the America, commanded each by a captain like Manly, Dale, Biddle, Barney, or Cottineau, I should let fly the general signal for closer action, and leave the results to take care of itself. But, if I had captains like Landais, *or some others not needful to name*, I should contemplate the probable outcome with a shudder."

In his letters to Hewes, Jones acknowledges that he was indebted to him for his appointment. I give two extracts out of many to support this. In a letter to Hewes of May 22, 1778, he says: ". . . The great individual obligation I owe you makes it more than ever my duty to keep you personally advised of my movements. I need not assure you that this is a welcome duty, much as I deplore the cause of it, for the reason that I know there is no person living to whom news of my success can bring more satisfaction than to yourself. And you are surely entitled to such satisfaction *because you more than any other person* have labored to place the instruments of success in my hands."

Again, writing Hewes under date of November 7, 1778, he says: "Of one thing, in spite of all, you may definitely assure yourself, and that is I will not accept any command or enter into any arrangement, that can in the least bring in question or put out of sight the regular rank I hold in the

United States Navy, for which I now, as always, acknowledge my debt to you more than to any other person." These extracts fully establish the truth of the statement before made that Hewes procured Jones his appointment in the navy, a fact which I think is now conceded by every one who has made a study of his career.

There is another fact which goes to corroborate the reasons I have advanced for his change of name, and that is that Paul Jones was appointed to the Continental Navy from the State of North Carolina. In the 21st volume of the Colonial and State Records, page 527, is a letter from Hon. Robert Burton, of Granville County, then a member of Congress, to Governor Samuel Johnston, dated January 28, 1789. It is as follows:

"Dear Sir:

As those who have fought and bled for us in the late contest cannot be held in too high esteem, and as Chevalier John Paul Jones *is among the foremost who derived their appointment from this State* that deserves to be held in remembrance to the latest Ages, I take the liberty of offering to the State as a present thro' you, its chief Magistrate, the Bust of that great man and good soldier to perpetuate his memory. If you do me the honor to accept it, you will please inform me by a line."

To this, Governor Johnston replied, under date of February 19, 1789, that he would readily accept the bust, on behalf of the State, and communicate Mr. Burton's letter to the next General Assembly for its order. Soon after this, November 27, 1789, Governor Johnston was elected to the Senate of the American Congress, and I cannot find that he or his successor, Governor Martin, communicated Mr. Burton's letter to the Assembly. I find among the correspondence of Jones* a letter to Jefferson, dated Paris, March 20, 1791, in which he says that Mr. Burton had asked for his bust in behalf of the State of North Carolina, and that he had ordered Houdon to prepare and forward it by the first ship

*Sherbourne, page 327.

from Havre de Grace to Philadelphia addressed to Jefferson, and he asked him to give it to the North Carolina delegates to forward to the governor of that State. Jefferson answered this letter under date of August 31, 1791, but made no answer or reference to this request. After much inquiry, I am forced to the conclusion that the matter dropped right here, and, as Paul Jones died July 18, 1792, that the bust was never presented to the State.

All of Jones's biographers, I believe, agree that he came to American in 1773, and most of them, certainly those self-styled historians who have written sketches for the newspapers and magazines, assert that he came to take over the estate of his brother, William Paul. Even his niece, Miss Taylor, in her book, page 310, says: "He had recovered, as I know from the best sources, several thousand pounds from the wreck of his brother's fortune in Virginia." This statement cannot be reconciled with the indisputable facts, that William Paul left his entire estate to his sister, Mary Lowden, and her two eldest children, that William Paul did not die, and his will was not admitted to probate, until late in the year 1774, at least a year after Jones came to America, and that a stranger was allowed to administer upon it. I am informed by the clerk of Spotsylvania County, that no account of the administration or distribution of this estate can be found among the records of his court, but as a bond of only £500 was required of the administrator, the personal estate could not have exceeded £250.

Jones himself ascribes another reason for his coming to America, and as it tends to support the fact I am striving to prove, I shall give it. In a letter to Robert Morris, dated September 4, 1776, he says: "I conclude that Mr. Hewes has acquainted you with a very great misfortune which befell me some years ago *and which brought me into North America*. I am under no concern whatever that this, or any other past circumstance of my life, will sink me in your opinion."

Sherbourne, in commenting on this letter, most truly says: "The misfortune of which he speaks could not have implicated his moral character, or he would not have enjoyed the confidence of the Honorable Mr. Hewes, to whom, as Jones informed Mr. Morris, the particulars were known." I have no doubt that this misfortune to which Jones alludes was the death of Maxwell, which was charged against him in England as murder.

There is still another fact, lightly touched upon by the writers, which supports my views. In a letter to Mr. Stuart Mawey, of Tobago, dated May 4, 1777, and given in full by Miss Taylor in her book, page 25, Jones says: "After an unprofitable suspense of twenty months (having subsisted on £50 only during that time), when my hopes of relief were entirely cut off, and there remained no possibility of my receiving wherewithal to subsist upon from my effects in your island, or in England, *I at last had recourse to strangers for that aid and comfort*, which was denied me by those friends, whom I had entrusted with my all. The good offices which are rendered to persons in their extreme need ought to make deep impressions on grateful minds; in my case, I feel the truth of that sentiment, and am bound by gratitude as well as honor to *follow the fortunes of my late benefactors*. . . . I wish to disbelieve it, although it seems too much of a piece with the unfair advantage which to all appearance he took of me, *when he left me in exile for twenty months a prey to melancholy and want*." This period "of unprofitable suspense," during which he eked out existence for twenty months on bare £50, and which doubtless was as gall and wormwood to his proud spirit, must have been that "period of obscurity" between 1773 and 1775, which was as a sealed book to all of his biographers save Buell, and the period of which he spent a large part at the homes of Allen and Willie Jones. I think I am justified in saying, that they were the "benefactors" to whom he alluded, and that his declarations

that he "was bound by gratitude as well as honor to follow" their fortunes, was intended as an explanation of his having adopted the cause of the colonies as his own. If Jones had acquired that valuable plantation in Virginia from his brother and William Jones, as Buell says he did, could he have complained that he had been left "in exile for twenty months a prey to melancholy and want" with but £50 for his subsistence during that period, and have spoken only of his property in Tobago and England.

Having treated him with such gross neglect and base ingratitude during his life, it is but a fitting sequel that this great republic should now surround his last interment with all that pomp and glory which would have been so grateful to him in life. Neglected in life and exalted after death—such, alas, is too often the tardy and empty tribute awarded by our people to our great men.

In a few modest words, Jones has summed up the value of his services to this country. Miss Taylor (page 548) says the following, in his own handwriting, was found after his death among his papers: "In 1775, I, Paul Jones, armed and embarked in the first American ship of war. In the Revolution, he had 23 battles and solemn recounters by sea; made seven descents in Britain and her colonies; took of her navy two ships of equal, and two of far superior force, many store ships and others; constrained her to fortify her ports; suffer the Irish volunteers (meaning the embodying of the militia in Ireland not before allowed, J. D.), desist from her cruel burnings in America, and exchange, as prisoners of war, the American citizens, taken on the ocean and cast into prisons in England as traitors, pirates and felons. In his perilous situation in Holland, his conduct drew the Dutch into the war, and eventually abridged the Revolution."

What more fitting epitaph for the grand column of marble, which will be erected over his ashes at Annapolis, can be proposed than this? He has written his own epitaph, and

it should be adopted to point out the story of his life to the future officers of our navy.

In an article written by Mr. J. H. Myrover, of Fayetteville, N. C., which lately appeared in the *Wilmington Messenger*, and which prompted me to write this article, he virtually stated that in his opinion there was no foundation for the tradition that John Paul took the name of Jones out of his affection for Willie Jones and his wife. Emanating from such an accomplished and well-known writer, and one so well informed in the history of his State, this declaration must have attracted attention and may some day be cited for authority. For this, and other apparent reasons, I have thought it would be well within the scope of this article to sketch briefly the political standing and influence of Willie Jones at the breaking out of the Revolution. One reason given by Mr. Myrover, for his disbelief, was that Willie Jones "was, if anything, a younger man than John Paul Jones; and though always a great man, Willie Jones had not reached the zenith of his power and political influence until John Paul had been sleeping in his grave for some years in Paris." I do not know the date of the birth of Willie Jones, but he was only two or three years younger than his brother, General Allen Jones, who was born in 1739. Willie Jones was *aide de camp* and captain on Tryon's staff during the war of the Regulators. He was a member of the General Assemblies of 1770, 1771, 1772, 1773, 1774, and also a delegate to the first and second Provincial Congresses. As early as 1773, he was the friend and associate of Cornelius Harnett, John Harvey, Samuel Johnston, William Hooper, Maurice Moore, Joseph Hewes, Hugh Waddell, Abner Nash, Thos. Person, Thomas Jones, and others of like fame and influence. John Harvey, "the great moderator," was then the acknowledged leader of the patriots, and the man to whom all looked for the initiative in all important undertakings. It is generally conceded that we owe to him that celebrated convention—the first Provincial

Congress—which met at New Bern in 1774. Governor Martin had dissolved the General Assembly and determined not to call it together again. This determination had been communicated by Martin's private secretary, Biggleston, to Harvey, who was the Speaker of the House. Saunders, in his prefatory notes to vol. 9, Colonial Records, page 29, says: "Harvey's reply to this was, 'Then the people will convene one themselves.'" On the 3d of April, 1774, Harvey conferred with Willie Jones at Halifax, and on the 4th, with Samuel Johnston and Col. Buncombe at the house of the latter in Tyrrell County. "He was in a very violent mood," says Johnston, in a letter written to William Hooper on the next day, "and declared he was for assembling a convention independent of the governor, and that he *would lead the way and issue hand bills over his own name.*" Moore, in his History, vol. 1, page 162, in writing of the same matter, says: "Harvey left New Bern at once, and *first* sought the counsel and aid of Willie Jones. In him he recognized a kindred spirit, and to him it was *first proposed* April 3, 1774, that Col. Harvey, as Speaker of the House of Assembly, should call a convention of the people at New Bern. . . . Willie Jones gave his hearty adhesion to the scheme. He was to North Carolina what Thomas Jefferson was to Virginia."

Jones says, page 124: "There were five characters of that day, *whose extraordinary* services in the cause of the first Provincial Congress deserve to be particularly noticed. John Harvey, William Hooper, *Willie Jones*, Samuel Johnston and James Iredell, were the principal pioneers in that great and perilous undertaking." So that we find Harvey to whom the whole State looked as its leader, singling out Willie Jones as the first man in the State with whom he would counsel as to the grave, momentous and extremely perilous step he was then intending to propose and advocate—a step so grave, so full of peril and danger to the life and property of all its advocates, that the counties of Chatham, Edgecombe, Guil-

ford, Hertford, Surry, and Wake, and the boroughs of Hillsboro, Salisbury, Brunswick Town and Campbelltown shrunk from electing delegates to the convention.

When Martin fled from New Bern, there were no courts and no laws, and it became necessary to provide some system of government for the new and budding State. The Congress on August 20, 1775, appointed a committee, of which Willie Jones was one, for that purpose, and out of its deliberations was evolved the Provincial Council, consisting of thirteen members, which was to be the supreme executive of the State when the Congress was not sitting. This council was composed as follows: Samuel Johnston, chairman; Cornelius Harnett, Samuel Ashe, Thomas Jones, Whitmell Hill, Abner Nash, James Coor, Thomas Person, John Kinchin, *Willie Jones*, Thomas Eaton, Samuel Spencer, and Waightstill Avery, all historic names, and the deeds and fame of the men who wore them, still shine down to us through the ages of the past.

The Provincial Congress which met at Halifax in April, 1776, abolished the Provincial Council and created in its stead a State Council of Safety. Of this council, Willie Jones was chairman, and so during its life was virtually governor of the State. On November 12, 1776, a congress met at Halifax, which had been called, and the delegates to it elected, for the purpose of framing and adopting a Bill of Rights and a Constitution, and appointed a committee to draft these instruments, of which Willie Jones was a member. The Bill of Rights was adopted December 17, 1776, and the Constitution December 18, 1776.

Jones says (page 287): "Thus were the Bill of Rights and the Constitution of the State formed. They are said to have come from the pen of Thomas Jones, aided and assisted by Willie Jones." Again, on page 139, Jones says: "Thomas Jones, of Chowan, was a lawyer of some distinction in those days and carried the skill and prudence of his profession to

the American cause. Between this man and Willie Jones rests the honor of having written the Constitution of North Carolina. I speak upon the authority of a deceased friend (the late Judge Murphy) when I ascribe the distinction to Thomas Jones, although I do not deny the claim of the other. They were most undoubtedly the framers of the instrument; and it bears in so many instances the stamp of the peculiar services of Willie Jones, that I cannot give up the conclusion which I formed so many years since, that he had a material agency in its composition, as well as its adoption." This was that grand and sublime chart of our liberties, which was handed down from one generation to another unaltered for sixty years, and but slightly changed or amended, until it was soiled by the foul touch of the hand of reconstruction. In the light of these facts, graven upon the history of our State, who can say with truth that Willie Jones was in 1775 without power or political influence in the State?



